



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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ICE nabs 38 illegal aliens working at a Puerto Rico construction site

CAGUAS, Puerto Rico—Thirty-eight illegal aliens working at a construction site here were arrested yesterday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents.

The 38 men, all nationals of the Dominican Republic, worked at Los Pradros, a site that will feature homes, apartments and a shopping center. Los Pradros' construction site is managed by Cue & Lopez Contractors, Inc.

All of those arrested have been placed in removal proceedings for being in violation of immigration laws. They are in ICE custody at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. All will remain in custody awaiting the outcome of their cases.

"ICE is aggressively enforcing our immigration laws and will not tolerate the hiring of illegal aliens by employers," said Lydia St. John-Mellado, special agent-in-charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Puerto Rico. "ICE is presenting cases for prosecution and, in some cases, seizing assets derived from illegal activities as tools against employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens. While in the past only administrative sanctions were imposed to those who hired illegal aliens, ICE will now, whenever possible, seek criminal charges for money laundering and harboring."

This worksite enforcement operation is part of the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a comprehensive multi-year plan by the Department of Homeland Security to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration. Under SBI, Homeland Security seeks to gain operational control of both the northern and southern borders, while re-engineering the detention and removal system to ensure that illegal aliens are removed from the country quickly and efficiently. SBI also involves strong interior enforcement efforts, including enhanced worksite enforcement investigations and intensified efforts to track down and remove illegal aliens inside this country.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Branch and the Puerto Rico Police Department participated in the operation.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

